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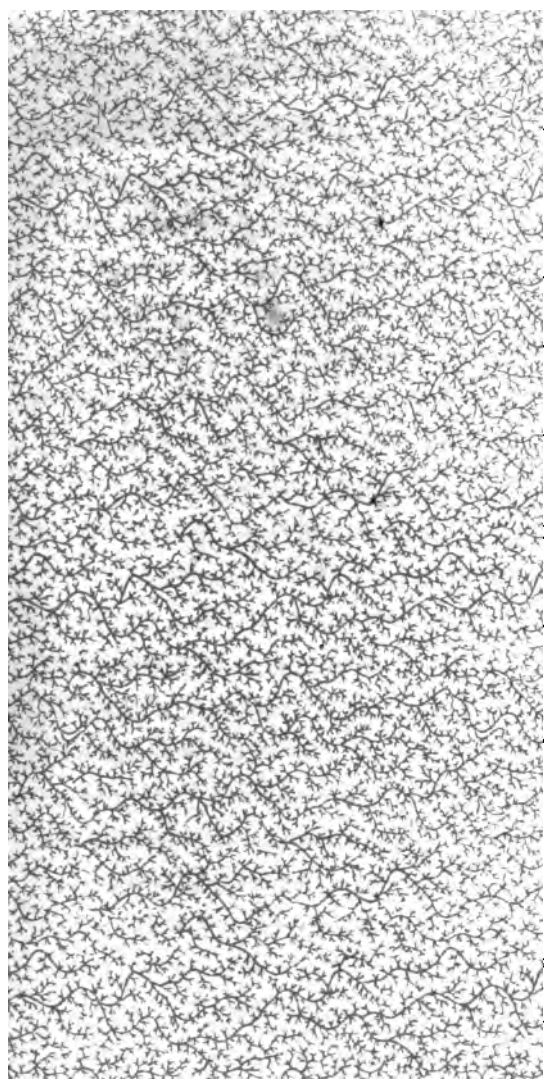
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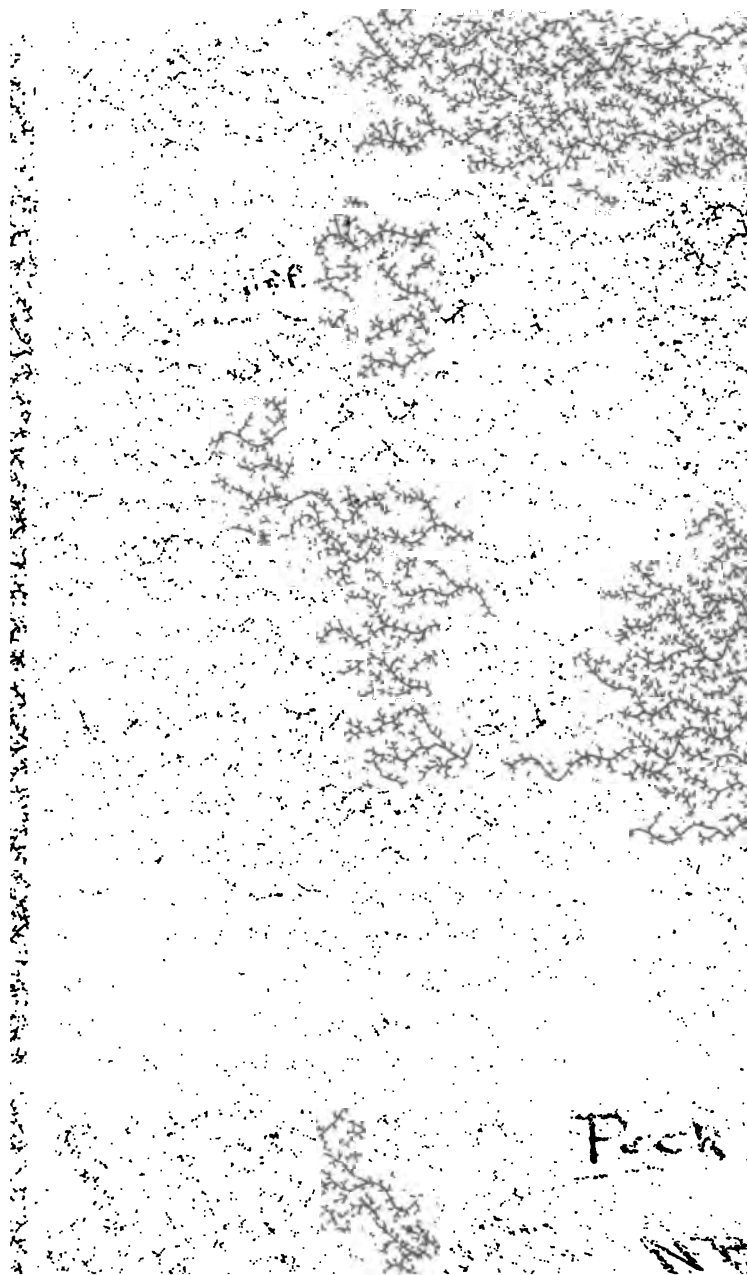
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AURIFODINA;

OR,

ADVENTURES IN THE

GOLD REGION.

BY

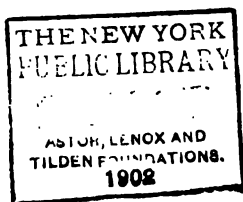
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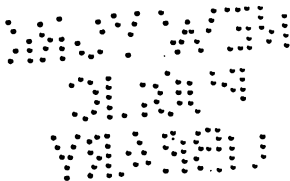
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INTRODUCTORY.

SINCE the existence of the California gold region is no longer a secret, known only to a few individual adventurers, of whom I know not if any but myself are still alive, and since hundreds are now flocking to the new El Dorado, so keen-scented for the glittering spoil that every mountain and valley of that portion of our continent will soon be examined and ransacked—there is no reason why I should continue to withhold from the public my personal knowledge of that region; and especially the extraordinary occurrences which befel me in attempting a journey thence across to Santa Fé. Even did I desire, which I do not, to turn my discoveries to profit, it is now too late, while if I delay longer in

making them known, some other man may possibly dispute with me the claim to have made them. I will therefore give my countrymen the benefit of them at once.

The narrative will necessarily contain much that may tax credulity. But I beg the reader to consider what motive I could possibly have in telling improbable falsehoods? One who relates what is contrary to all that was previously known of the order of nature, must either speak from actual observation, or else in the expectation of being disbelieved. Which of these is my condition, may be judged when I profess myself ready to substantiate whatever in the following account shall be seriously doubted, by an affidavit before any respectable magistrate. More than this cannot be required or expected of a traveller.

AURIFODINA.

It is enough to say, that when the Exploring Expedition, under Lieut. Wilkes, left the Northwest coast in '37 or '38 (I forget the year) I was *not* on board, and that after that time, up to the time when I set out on my return to the United States, I led a hunter's life up and down the wild region between Monterey and the mouth of the Columbia. Of the gold in the Sacramento valley, I first heard accounts from an old trapper, who had his knowledge from an Indian woman, and with him and three others—one a Scotchman, deserter from the Hudson Bay Company's employ—all of whom we fell in with at a miserable Utah encampment, about an hundred

and fifty miles South and East from the mouth of the Columbia, we made up a party, and set off to explore that part of the country. It was mid-winter when we struck Southward, and we underwent many hardships before we reached our point of destination, towards the end of March. But we were inured to mountain life; the season was every day growing milder; the snow had melted, and the lines of timber, marking distant water-courses, had turned to green, ere we made our final encampment near the margin of one of the tributaries of the Pactolean river.

Here, I need not say, our most sanguine expectations were more than realized. The accounts with which the newspapers are now teeming, make it superfluous for me to enter into particulars—~~but~~ suffice it that before the end of May, we had each gathered more of the precious harvest than we knew how to carry away. As our store increased, we began to lay plans for the future. My companions decided to go down to Monterey: they flattered themselves they could manage to conceal their treasure in bun-

dles of hides, until they could obtain passage home. But I did not like the idea of venturing with so much riches into that lawless vicinity, and as the season was favorable, I determined to follow up the river valley, and take the chance of discovering a pass across the Sierra ; this gained, I felt sure of my ability to reach Santa Fé, or perhaps Fort Independence, in safety. I had a good supply of ammunition, and a hunter does not suffer his rifle and revolver to take injury from want of care. Of gold I had enough to load a couple of mules, which I bought from the Indians, and my horse, who was in excellent condition after his two months' rest. My companions were equally well provided. For the last week while we remained at the encampment, we were busy in manufacturing packs for our beasts from hides, of which we had no difficulty in obtaining from the Indians a sufficient supply. Finally, when all our arrangements were completed, we separated, on what day of the month we could not tell, but it was late in the Spring. What became of my companions afterwards I never knew, except on the

second day after, when a party of Indians who overtook me informed me by signs that they had met four white men encamped, a mule belonging to one of them having broken its back ; that the owner had endeavored to buy another beast of them, but refused to give their price, upon which they had retreated, fearing it would be taken from them by force ; that this white man had chased them a little way, when seeing his companions moving on, he had returned and remained behind. Whether this was the Scotchman or one of the Yankees, I could only guess, but being myself New England born, I inferred it must be the Caledonian.

For several days I continued my course through the valley, the snowy line of the still distant Sierra becoming daily more and more distinct, and rising before me like an inaccessible wall. The country grew gradually more broken, and at length, after a toilsome day's march up a *canon*, or succession of long rapids in the river, I found myself among the gorges and defiles of the mountains. Hemmed in seemingly on every side by gloomy precipices, which

lapped one upon another, it now required all my experience of such regions to choose among the narrow ravines, those which afforded a practicable pathway; and often I was obliged, with my tired and ill-fed beasts, to retrace our steps for half a day together.

Towards the right hand, somewhat more to the Southward, there appeared a break in the chain, which, upon reflection, I considered most likely to be such a pass as I desired to find. Accordingly I diverged from the Eastern course, and gradually, while still ascending, fell off in that direction. I had attained an elevation where a difference of climate was very perceptible; wood grew scarcer; finally it ceased altogether. I now suffered severely from the cold, and began to repent me of my hazardous undertaking.

But I had come so far that it was as dangerous to retreat as to advance. I had still some supply of provender for my horse and the mules—enough, I thought, if I was fortunate, to last until we could reach the green bottoms on the other side; and my

stock of dried meat was yet by no means exhausted. I kept up my spirits therefore, and pushed resolutely onward.

As it happened, however, that very day, while we wound along the edge of a fearful steep, my horse, whom I was leading, stumbled, and his hind feet slipped off the verge. For an instant he struggled to recover himself, but sooner than I can relate it, the poor beast was rolling over and over, down a descent from which nothing living, save a creature of the air, could return with life. He carried a third part, or about a hundred and fifty pounds of the gold, together with a portion of my own provisions, and his scanty share of the feed.

Here was this much of my spoil gone from me, as irrecoverably as if it had been sunk in the sea!

I had gathered, as nearly as I could judge, by comparison with the weight of my rifle, about four hundred and fifty pounds; which I had sewn into three packs of hides, and distributed equally among my animals. I expected to realize from the whole, between thirty and forty thousand dollars—to a

man of moderate desires and simple habits, a very sufficient sum. But I had no time to bewail my loss; the immediate dangers around me demanded all my attention.

I had now passed a ridge which divided the valley or succession of gorges I had come through, from those of the gap in the mountain range, where I expected to find a pass. Descending the side I was now on, the view stretched away in a direction which bore so far southward that I concluded the ridge to be a kind of separating wall between the head-waters of the Sacramento and those of the Colorado, or some one of its numerous tributaries. As I had hoped, it extended upward into the very heart of the mountains, and that by an easier ascent than the route I had been pursuing.

But though from the sublimity of the snow-capped summits which towered above me, the distance appeared not great, I was two days and nights winding up this ravine. The cold had increased until I was well nigh frozen, and when at length I reached the highest point, I encountered a

terrific snow-storm, which, while it threatened to bury me and my beasts, may have been the means of our preservation; for I verily believe another bitter night without any shelter, would have chilled me to death, both me and the dumb animals. As it was, one of the patient creatures perished, and as the other was in no condition to take any additional burden, I was again deprived of another third, or the half of my remaining treasure.

When we are very much worn, however, by fatigue or sickness, things which would otherwise affect us deeply, make but a slight impression; I was now half starved and benumbed with cold, and I thought only of getting safely to the low country with what remained of my gold, or even without it, should it be necessary.

Accordingly, giving my remaining mule a good breakfast from the pack of his fellow, I set forth again with new resolution. The snow was light, and made less impediment to my progress than I had anticipated. As the sun came up, the white mist which had concealed the prospect below,

crept up the sides of the spectral summits that rose behind me, and revealed a vast scene of mountain sublimity, bordering far below what seemed a green ocean—an appearance which I knew could only be produced by a large extent of well watered and fertile country.

The descent was much less difficult than the ascent had been. Before noon that same day, we had safely emerged from the region of snow, and at nightfall, when I encamped by the margin of a small mountain lake, I fancied I could see little specks of light in the plain beneath, which I took to be the fires of Indian villages. I judged the country, from this circumstance, as well as from the uniform green appearance it had exhibited whenever I obtained glimpses of it, to be of a prairie character; and talked confidently to my poor jaded mule (who understood me very well) of the good times in store for us if we got safely through the morrow.

Next morning we made an early start, and were several hours on our way before the rising of the mist. It became clear as I was performing the

ceremony of breakfast on the last remnant of my dried beef. We had just rounded the brow of a stupendous acclivity that lifted its front far above us, and I had seated myself to obtain a few moments' rest, before attempting the perilous descent along the sides of a dark ravine which proceeded from its base.

What was my surprise, when, on bending my gaze over the horizon, I perceived that I was descending, not into a luxuriant, half inhabited wilderness, but to a region which had every appearance of supporting a numerous population! I saw rivers, winding, like silver threads, through a cultivated country, where I could count many villages, and in the midst a large city with glistening spires. Where could I have come? I must be considerably south of my original route, and either overlooked a portion of the unexplored region south of the Great Salt Lake, or what is put down on the maps as the Deserts of Gila. Surely here could be no cities and villages such as I beheld, or fancied I beheld.

I have seen men crazed with the effect of cold and fatigue, and it presently came across me that this was now my condition. Yet I felt sane ; in proof of health, I had just eaten poor fare with such relish as famishing men only have experienced. But on the whole, the improbability of my seeing what I seemed to see, outweighed the evidence of my senses. I refused to believe my own eyes, and set myself to conquer them. But it was to so little purpose that I soon gave over the attempt, and determined to abandon myself to a delusion which was at last pleasing and harmless, until I reached the plain, when I flattered myself a little nice fat buffalo hump would soon restore me.

Near the base of the mountains, about three o'clock in the afternoon, I came upon a spring of water, which gushed from under a ledge and sent a stream across a narrow glade and down a thick-wooded glen. Grass grew luxuriantly along the margin of the rivulet, and my patient companion cropped it eagerly, while I ran to the fountain-head no less eagerly, (for we had again reached a sum-

mer temperature,) and fell upon my hands and knees to drink.

Imagine my astonishment, when, as I looked into the shallow basin, I perceived that more than half the pebbles on its bottom were of bright gold ! I reached down my hand and took up a quantity of them ; there could be no illusion ; they were very heavy, and had as much the appearance of gold as any specimens in the pack, of which I had just relieved my mule. The whole of the little basin was yellow with them, and so was the bottom of the rivulet. They were of all sizes, and rounded by the action of the water, just as we may see the pebbles in any of the little springs and rills that abound in rocky pastures. Some were worn into regular oblong shapes like eggs ; I collected several of these and placed them on the grass beside me. Then I lay down by them and thought of the fable of the golden goose. I was tired and faint for want of food, and the wonder of what I saw, combined with this condition, so bewildered me that I fell into a kind of reverie, and presently slept.

I may have remained thus about an hour, when the noise of voices awakened me ; I started to my feet, grasping my rifle. But the sound of the voices quickly convinced me that there was no occasion to act defensively, for it could only come from a number of men and women talking and laughing in unreserved gaiety. While I was debating whether I should attempt to conceal myself, in my weak state, when the finding of my mule would lead inevitably to a search, the branches of the underwood at the side of the glen were disturbed, and several persons came forth, who stopped suddenly on seeing me, as if surprised. Knowing that such is the best course with the Indians, I lowered my rifle, and reaching out my hand advanced towards them. But in a moment, I perceived that these could not belong to any tribe with which I was acquainted, nor did they indeed resemble Indians at all. When I came within a few yards of the foremost of them I stopped, still, however, holding out my hand ; their numbers had increased as they emerged from the glen, until there were now, perhaps, twenty young men and



women. They were, I conjectured, celebrating some festive occasion, for many of the young women had garlands around their heads, and the whole party were dressed in gay apparel—the young men in loose doublet and pantaloons, and wide-brimmed hats, and their companion in robes bound about their waists with golden girdles. They stood a moment and regarded me, conversing among themselves. As they did so I could not help remarking a certain air of nobility in their forms and gestures, and the peculiar, simple richness of their clothing. There was a radiance in their whole aspect. They had all golden hair, like our Saxon ancestors ; their garments bore a certain resplendence, as if they had been washed in aureate waters ; even their very complexions and countenances showed a sunny tinge, like that which is imparted by a strong yellow light. As they stood before me I could not help thinking of the “shining ones” in the Pilgrim’s Progress, who come down from the gates of heaven to meet Christian.

But they did not permit me to observe them long,

for in a very few moments one of the most dignified advanced and took my hand, saying in a distinct voice as he did so :—

“ *Eau de Dieu ! eau de Dieu !* ”

I have but an imperfect knowledge of the French language, picked up chiefly among the Canadian half-breeds, but the meaning here appeared too plain to be missed. This wonderful spring was esteemed sacred by them, as well it might be, and they had came up to perform some rite of worship. I therefore assented at once, and made a speech, beginning “ Brothers ! ” &c., explaining how I came there and that I meant no intrusion or desecration of the place—just as I should had I come upon a Chippewa village. But my interlocutor stared, and shook his head, as if he had vainly endeavored to comprehend me. He then made a speech himself, of the purport of which I could gather nothing. I in return, tried several Indian dialects with no avail. Upon this my spokesman beckoned one whom he called “ *Liu*, ” from the others, and he came forward and addressed me interrogatively, I know not how many

times, till finally we both smiled at the hopelessness of endeavoring to converse when we had no language in common.

The company then gathered around me and gave their attention—not, however, without some contemptuous glances at my wretched figure from some of the young ladies, while I strove by signs to make them understand where I came from, and how I came there. I am accustomed to this kind of language, and soon made them know that I had come across the mountains, from a distant land, and was journeying homeward to the East. This excited great astonishment, which was mightily increased when I led my mule from behind a clump of underbrush. Some of them were not a little frightened ; but the young women, who at first ran away, quickly returned when they saw the monster eat grass, and very soon could hardly keep their hands off the ugly creature.

I showed the gentlemen, or noblemen, as they might be from their bearing, the rich pebbles I had taken from the spring. They examined them, but with careless eyes, and even while I was dilating

upon their value, one of them coolly threw the largest into the deepest part of the spring. I was not in a condition to resent the offence, being entirely in their power ; but I suppose my face expressed indignation, for the person who had given the insult immediately called one who seemed to be an attendant, who waded into the water and brought me, not only the pebble which had been thrown in, but twice as many more, larger and more beautiful. I observed that, as he did so, he took up and threw back five or six great irregular lumps, as if he supposed I desired only the perfectly round ones. In five minutes, there lay on the grass beside me three times as much of the precious metal as I had at the commencement of my journey, on the other side of the Sierra.

I addressed the principal personage, with whom I had first spoken, craving leave to retain as many of these pebbles as my mule would carry. Smiling, as though the present were the merest nothing, he at once motioned his permission. Upon this, I gladly undid my mule pack, and poured out my

former collection, to make room for the magnificent gift. My new friends examined my former treasure with a puzzled scrutiny, some of them laughing loudly, and some looking upon me with a compassionate expression. The one who appeared to have most authority, approached, and touching my forehead, shook his head.

Intent upon my new riches, I minded not the odd manner with which they now regarded me, but kept busily filling my packs, till I had got twice as much as my mule could carry, and was obliged to unpack them. The regretful air with which I did this attracted the attention of him who had given them to me, and he at once ordered four or five of the others to take in their hands all that my mule could not carry.

I was overjoyed at this, and, notwithstanding my exhausted state, descended the slope of the mountain along with the party, leading my mule, with great alacrity—falling readily into the gay humor of my companions, and endeavoring to contribute my share of the amusement by laughing at merry

sayings I did not understand, and half suspected were frequently occasioned by my uncouth costume and singular manners.

As we reached the base of the last steep declivity, the land spread away in gentle undulations, and the forests gave place to lawns, diversified by irregular groves and picturesque detachments of lordly trees, fit scenery for a royal park, such as it actually was. Proceeding onwards, it assumed more and more the appearance of artificially ornamented grounds, until at length we came into circuitous walks, which wound through thickets, where thrushes and mocking-birds, and others of notes and plumage unknown to me, filled the air with melody. On one side might be seen elegant fountains, emblems of life, dashing their white spray above the green foliage, and on another, inviting walks, bordered with roses, and leading to vine-covered arbors.

Suddenly we emerged from this enchanted scene, and came upon a high wall, partly overgrown with creeping plants, yet not enough to conceal from the

eye that it was of a dull yellow color. I approached it, and ascertained that it was built of *adobes*, or sun-dried bricks, and that the sand or clay of which they were composed, was so impregnated with gold as to impart to them its lustre. But before I had time to speculate upon this new miracle, our company paused before a great gate of solid Gold, twice as high as our heads, and wrought, not in leaf or fanciful work, but with huge round bars and bands, less for ornament than strength.

An ancient porter undid the fastenings of this gate, and led us into an open lawn, in the middle of which, extending from the gateway, was a broad walk, flagged with slabs of pure gold, laid in lozenges, and leading three or four hundred paces to the entrance of a splendid Summer Palace, whose roof blazed like fire in the now declining sunlight. On either side of this walk was a magnificent fountain, playing into a great golden basin, surrounded by shrubbery. Near these basins, I observed extending from the main avenue many narrower walks, paved or gravelled also with the precious metal.

Overwhelmed by this display of inexhaustible wealth, and yet wishing to save myself some credit for discernment, which my conduct at the spring must, I now saw, have called in question, I be-thought me of an expedient. Desiring the company to halt, I made those who had brought a part of the golden pebbles in their hands, lay them on the walk before me—much to their gratification, for the weight of them was very considerable. Then taking out those I had in my pack, and putting them with the others, I proceeded gravely to mend a spot in one of the pavements, composed of similar pebbles which had got displaced.

This caused much merriment among the company to all except the person in authority, or the Prince, for that was his real title, and one other, whom he called before him, and addressed in a severe tone, while the other appeared to excuse himself for some fault. The rest seemed to look upon me as an odd sort of prophet, who had been sent down from the sky to expose the neglect of the Superintendent of the Gardens.

When we reached the entrance of the palace, the Prince gave my mule to the charge of attendants, and taking my hand, led me up the broad golden stairs to beneath the lofty, burnished pillars of the portico; then pointing to one who stood near him, he placed me under his charge, and after saying a few words of courtesy to the noble group, who saluted him in return, retired to his private apartments. The effect of his manner towards me was quickly apparent in the altered behavior of the courtiers; for the Prince to hand a person up the stairs of the palace, I afterwards learned, was a mark of high favor. They all, except he to whose charge I had been given, bade me a very deferential good evening, and left us.

My guardian, who was no less a personage than the Comptroller of the Kitchen, was not long in comprehending that I was very hungry and tired. He conducted me at once to an apartment, where, after a capital steak served on gold plate, and a half pint of small ale, out of a gold mug, he showed me to a couch, on which, it may be ima-

gined, I had not thrown myself many minutes, before my overtasked body found repose.

Next morning I woke early, and found a gold bathing-tub arranged in my chamber; also several suits of rich apparel, such as I had seen worn by the royal company. The bath was extremely refreshing after my late hardships, and selecting, as I came from it, the plainest of the suits of clothing, I soon transformed myself into a member of (for aught I knew) some descendant of Montezuma, or the King of Serendib.

Ringing a gold bell that stood on the dressing table of the same material, so massy that I could not move it, attendants came, who led the way to a gilded hall, where my appointed host waited to conduct me to a more substantial repast than I had enjoyed the night previous. He made signs to let me know that my simple supper had been designed to bring my stomach to resume its office by degrees, and that now I might gratify my appetite without stint. But he evidently had no idea of the quantity of animal food a half-starved mountaineer can con-

sume ; and as he sat opposite, and saw steak, and chop, and broiled chicken, and eggs, a whole nestful, go down the same orifice, and the gold knife and fork still plying with unabated speed, he could not help drawing back and uttering exclamations of astonishment, one of which, "*Mi-hiis!*" I caught ; he used it with great emphasis on the last syllable.

After breakfast we sauntered about the palace, and (what I have to relate hereafter, will acquit me of exaggeration) from what appeared, I could not doubt that more than half the material used in its construction was pure solid gold. The kitchen especially, and all the inferior apartments, were lined with rough slabs of gold, laid like marble. The pillars of the porticoes would, any one of them, have purchased a king's ransom ; and, had it been in my power, I would gladly have contracted for the entire façade, to extinguish the national debt of Great Britain. The yellow flooring of my breakfast hall would pay for the Mexican war ; the pots and kettles of the kitchen would buy out Mr. Astor ; and with the wash-hand basin and other

necessary furniture of my bed-chamber, I or Mr. Smith might shine as number one among our upper ten thousand. Soon after the clock struck ten, we were summoned to attend in the audience chamber. Here the Prince received us at the door, and congratulated me, by signs, on my improved appearance. As we walked in, I observed that though the walls of this apartment were of gold, like the others, care had been taken to hide them, by gracefully disposed hangings of green and white, while the furniture was of plain mahogany, and the floor covered by a straw carpeting.

Taking a high chair, the Prince motioned me to a seat near him, while the other courtiers and attendants gathered around us. Just then a number of ladies entered, some of whom were the same I had seen yesterday. After the usual bows and ceremonies, they seated themselves, and then the Prince, in order to ask me a simple question, began pointing to several of the attendants in succession, speaking a word as he did so to each one, and stopping when he came to me. I very soon understood,

and pointing to myself, carefully pronounced my name. The Prince and the rest then tried to speak it after me, but though it is with us a very common one, the sounds of their language were so unlike, that the best they could make of it was "*Quirkustuma*."

I then pointed to the Prince, and he answered "*Reechasmud*," which I could pronounce easily. He then took the tallest and eldest of the ladies by the hand, and said "*Morniwanta*," intimating that she was his wife ; I said the name after him, and kissed her ladyship's hand. They then called two of the young ladies, who much resembled each other, and giving me to understand that these were their daughters, pointed to each and said, "*Mi-deeré*," and "*Mibuta*." I repeated the words carefully, and saluted each of the damsels upon the cheek, (for, thought I, "how can they know what the custom is in my country?") I performed the same ceremony on two of the ladies in waiting, "*Kissame*," and "*Prittakritta*," partly out of revenge for their having laughed at me the day before.

I was next introduced in similar fashion to a grave old man, who, I afterwards found, was the Vizier or Premier; his name was "*Raforzak*." Then came several of the court, "*Pokitphul*," "*Kashkash*," "*Tinnanuf*," "*Guttichinks*," and many whose names I have forgotten.

Wishing to exhibit my knowledge of the language, I turned to the young ladies and exclaimed in a rapturous manner, "*My-HIIS!*" They blushed, and there was a general smile and exclamation in the company, of "*Ralynow! Oodthotit? Inevar!*" and the like, which interjections, when I came to know the language, I found conveyed surprise at my gallantry and quickness of apprehension, (for at this time, I afterwards discovered, they looked upon me as a new kind of creature, hardly more than half human.)

At length it was announced that I should be put under the tuition of *Liu*, the court philologist, who knew nothing but dialects, to acquire the language. As I passed out of the hall one of the young ladies whispered, "*weliku*;" another said, "*dongowaa*:"

and a third, tapping my shoulder with her fan, cried mockingly, "*hodfella!*" It may be supposed that I was not long in finding the meaning of these expressions, and that with such incentives, added to my natural readiness, the difficulties of the language yielded rapidly to my application.

At the audience the next day, I had made such progress as to be able to inquire the name of the country, which I found to be "AURIFODINA." But I could not teach the Prince to utter the words "*United States;*" he made many attempts—the nearest he could come was "*Donowar Tiz.*"

From that interview, the Prince's interest in me increased daily, and as I could not, by a law which excludes foreigners from holding any office under the sovereign, become an object of envy to any of those about his person, I was in high favor with all the Court. For my own part, I esteemed myself fortunate beyond all example, in being translated,

as it were, so suddenly from a life of hardship and peril, to a palace whose sumptuousness realized the visions of Oriental fancy, and a society which combined the splendor of regal pageantry with the manners of cultivated familiar intercourse. The Prince was one of those rare men who have the art of putting off dignity or assuming it at will; he was equally at home in the council chamber, the banquet hall, or in those private walks with select companions, in which it was his custom frequently to indulge. He was a frank, open, just man, charitable, in his opinions, not headstrong or bigoted, quick to perceive the upright intention, single-hearted, clear-headed, and withal cheerful within the limits of becoming mirth, as any man I ever met. He was indeed a man of gold, and his character was but reflected in the retinue of noblemen and ladies who composed his household. I had enjoyed this delightful society but a few days, when I perceived that the nature of the intercourse here was different from any other I had ever known. Every one seemed bent not only on making himself or herself

happy, but on being agreeable to the rest. And as each presumed on the like disposition in all the others, this desire of pleasing did not lead to over nicety and restraint, but to a natural freedom, the native grace of noble dispositions, most beautiful to see and pleasing to imitate. Here were no little jealousies, no intrigues, no setting of one over his friend, and hence, no private griefs, no heart-burning, malice, or uncharitableness.

In a single week I felt as much at home as if I had lived in a House of Gold, and among lords and ladies all my life. I grew in health and bodily comeliness, even as did poor muly, who had the run of a rich field of golden yellow-top, and was visited by all the neighboring population. Every morning the Prince held an audience, at which my attendance was indispensable ; after that, I pursued my study of the language four or five hours, while the other gentlemen and ladies of the palace attended to their official or domestic duties. At the hour of dinner it was the custom of those belonging especially to the Prince's family, to assemble in the

drawing-room of the ladies, and escort them to the royal dinner table. The family included those whose names I have already introduced to the reader; I also soon became a regular guest at these dinners—and royal dinners they were; the Prince taking the head of the table and carving the roast beef on a massy gold platter that four waiters could hardly remove, myself seated on one hand opposite his lady, the youngest daughter, *Mideeré*, next me, and Miss *Prittakritta*, *Tinnanuf*, (a capital fellow, always in good humor,) *Mibuta*, and the others below us on both sides of the board.

How I used, when the first course was over, to fill a great golden goblet, and set the young ladies into convulsions by requesting, in my broken way, the pleasure of taking wine with Her Majesty! And how the Prince and I tested the qualities of the various old Aurean vintages, and pronounced opinions in smiles and words, and smacks of the lips, ere we could communicate in language!

In little more than a fortnight I was able to name the principal objects about the palace, and make

myself intelligible on ordinary trivial topics ; in a month—so much easier is their language than ours—I had acquired a more extensive vocabulary, and could converse easily on all subjects except those of a metaphysical nature, (which I have ever found much difficulty in handling with clearness, even in our vernacular.) The dinners were now prolonged quite into the evening, and our conversations grew so interesting that Her Majesty and the ladies did not retire at the removal of the cloth, but remained and sipped their tea, while the Prince and I alternately questioned each other concerning our several countries, and their differences in manners and customs.

One of the first uses I made of my proficiency in the Aurifodinian tongue, was to inform the Prince and his family that gold, which was here so common, was in my country very rare, and of very great and constant value ; so much so, that it formed the standard of the national coin, and was little used but for purposes of ornament and luxury. I illustrated the estimation in which it was held, by pointing to a

few articles in the room, and saying that if I had them at home, I should be a person of extreme wealth. I explained how great a surprise to me had been the discovery of the gold pebbles in the spring, why I had been so eager to possess them, and the natural desire of being considered sound in mind, which, when I discovered that here they were of no value, led me to dispose of them so ingeniously.

All this was at first very surprising to my audience; but I had shown myself in other respects a person of good sense and good breeding, and as it accounted for my strange conduct at the spring, as well as for my odd habit of staring about me and continually touching almost everything that came in my way (for I do love the feel of gold, and always did) they could not refuse to believe me.

The Prince then proved to me that what seemed to me of such inestimable worth, was there worth really nothing, except the labor bestowed to render it available for building and other purposes. He made an excursion with me to some foundries in the

vicinity, where they were melting it in large clay pots or crucibles, such as are used in our iron works. The raw material was dug out of the next hill, the site of the foundry having been selected solely on account of the convenience of water power. After it is melted, if intended for building, it is rolled into large sheets, like boiler iron, which being easily pierced and riveted, are very convenient for common dwellings. Generally speaking, the dwellings in Aurifodina are of not more than one story ; when they are of two or three, the upper floors are laid upon wide joists of gold, made as light as possible on account of the weight, and set edgewise. The only portions of the metal usually polished, are the broad thin sheets covering the roofs ; these being bright, reflect the rays of the sun, and render the houses much cooler in summers and warm in winters ; the latter, however, are here extremely mild.

The effect of so much gilded surface is at first very dazzling ; I was obliged to tie the Princess *Mibuta's* veil over my face as we walked through the village near the foundry. It was a little relief that the

fronts of the houses are commonly painted of some dark color, green or blue ; for the people are so accustomed to yellow, seeing it everywhere, not only in-doors, but in their dusty roads and paved streets, that they never use it but for those purposes for which black is used among us. Seeing Miss *Kissame* return with moist eyes after speaking to a young girl clad in a gown woven of gold thread and yellow cotton, I inquired what was the matter, when she informed me that the poor thing had just lost her mother, and had not a sixpence in the world, and she was so sorry she had left her purse at home !

Hearing this, the Prince called *Pokitphul*, the Lord Treasurer, who was of the party, and told him to give the girl five shillings to get her something to eat, and said she must come up to the palace and ask the housekeeper if they wanted any help. I was curious to see what served here for coin, and asked *Pokitphul* to show me some, whereupon he pulled out a handful of round pieces of iron, of different sizes, and stamped with profiles of the Prince and his father. " There," said he, taking up one

of a middle size, "a hundred of those will buy you the handsomest house in the village." I could not help laughing. "In my country," said I, "you might get more than you could lift for a day's labor." It was a long time before I could persuade him I was not hoaxing him.

As we walked on, I saw a man with a wheelbarrow, dumping gravel, more than half of which was pure gold, into an old cellar ; and in another place, they were constructing an embankment for a new street, of the same sort of earth. One man had taken a fancy to have everything about his place polished ; so that from his dwelling down to the most diminutive of his outhouses, all were so bright it was quite blinding to look at them. A scavenger came up the street with a bronze-colored buffalo, harnessed to a cart, the body of which was of sheet gold. These buffalo supply the place of horses among the Aurifodinians ; they have horns the color of gold, and they make, when fatted, very good beef. We went into a jeweller's establishment, where I saw several neat ornaments cut out of slate ; there

were also several bits of granite, neatly set in steel. These, I was told, were of the highest value, the granite being procured from the most elevated places on the Sierra, (or “*skywall*” as it is called in their tongue, it being thought impassable and in some way upholding heaven,) and the difficulty of obtaining it of certain qualities being very great. I was much struck with the piles of dishes and covers of all sorts in a crockery store, some of the high priced being bound with iron bands, or having little bits of iron set in their rims; the Princess would be, she said, a little extravagant for once, and so she cheapened and bought a red glazed earthen soup tureen, and two ladles carved out of *lignum-vitæ*—“she was so tired,” she said, “of their old gold ones!” Seeing a woman beating her child, I asked her what it was for. “What for?” said she; “why he’s been getting his face all over gold!” Sure enough, the brat looked very like a bright bronze Cupid. If I could have had him at home, as I remarked to *Mideeré*, I would not have taken a hundred dollars for the privilege of washing him.

As we passed out of the village, on our way back to the palace, we crossed a brook, where were some ragged boys, half clad in cloth of gold, catching gold-fish out of the yellow stream ; what amused me at the moment, it being the first time I had ever seen the saying come true in a literal sense, they used gold hooks. Further on, I heard a noise of insects in a grove, and ascertained on inquiry that they were a species of the *Scarabeus*, or Gold Bug, of which a writer of singular fancy (*Mr. Poe*,) discovered the only specimen ever known to have found its way into the United States.

Many incidents of this kind very naturally attracted my attention in the early part of my residence in Aurifodina ; but as they were occurring every day, I soon grew as unobservant of them as if I had been a “ native and to the manor born.”

My knowledge of the language also soon grew to almost equal that which I possess of my mother tongue ; I could not only converse easily in it, but could read any of the books in the Royal Library, except the productions of ancient authors, which

♦

abound in obsolete words. It was my daily pleasure to occupy the morning hours after audience, making researches into the history, laws, and literature of this favored kingdom. The hall of the library was in the southeast corner of the east wing of the palace, where a group of graceful trees waved their foliage almost against the very windows. Here, in a golden alcove, during the summer forenoons, I delighted to sit and feast on the rich intellectual repast that burdened the shining shelves; for though of late years I had led a roving life, in my boyhood I was a great reader. Here too would glide in *Mideéré*, and bring her knitting work, and sit by my side, while I would read aloud, ready to explain any passage which I did not easily understand, or to point out beauties in their favorite poets; sweet lady! I preferred her before all the others; they had all hearts of gold, but hers was the purest.

I shall devote but a small part of my present space to matters relating to the history and literature of Au-

rifodina, it being my intention to treat of those topics more at large in a future work ; the present sketch is only intended as a plain account of my personal adventures.

With regard to the origin of this people, their own histories present conflicting statements ; I have nothing to offer but a theory, which, for the reason just given, must here be deferred.

Of the extent of the territory, I have no means of judging except a very imperfect observation, as I did not see the whole of it. Their geographers make it 750,000 *stradlii* in circumference ; if this measure is to be considered as equivalent to the ancient *stadii*, which was, nearly enough for a general estimate, the 00.1th of an English mile, we get 75,000 miles, which gives a diameter of 25,000 miles, or about the entire circumference of the earth. This result is so enormous, that I think I should incline to doubt the accuracy of the supposition on which it is based, even were I not certain that it could not possibly be true. I am rather disposed, from the analogy which obtains between the sound

of the word and that of another in the language which signifies "to place the feet far asunder," to believe that it corresponds nearly to our "pace;" which, estimated at five feet, would give a circumference of 650 miles or thereabout, and a diameter of 216.66, as any one may readily ascertain by working the problem. This is at least a more satisfactory conclusion, inasmuch as it lies within the limits of possibility. The reader may form some idea from this calculation, of the laborious nature of the details with which I shall be encumbered in preparing my great work; I design, however, to bring it out in Germany, where I am told there are readers who know how to appreciate elaborate research.

As regards the laws, manners, and customs of Aurifodina, it will have been already perceived that they do not differ materially from our own. The kingdom is a limited monarchy, consisting of an hereditary Prince and an appointed Council, which assembles every winter at the capital, and spends a vast deal of iron in transacting very little business.

The Prince does pretty much as he pleases, and so, for that matter, do his subjects. On the whole, therefore, public affairs go on there in the same way we are accustomed to see them at home. True, there are many minor differences in the laws of the two countries, but they are chiefly such as are rendered necessary through local causes. Gold, for example, there comes under the head of real property until after it is manufactured, and there is a heavy tax on all articles made of iron. But in most respects their common law exists, and is enforced very much as ours was fifty years ago, since which date many respectable members of the legal profession consider it questionable if we have made any decided improvement, either in its principles or their practical application.

By what means Christianity was first propagated among the Aurifodinians there is no deciding positively from their vague and contradictory traditions. But it must have spread very rapidly among so noble and intelligent a people. At present its divine doctrines and precepts are well understood by them,

and, I say it with some shame, better observed, I fear, than they are among ourselves. Fanaticism and excitements are little known ; there is not much division of sects. But there exists almost universally a deep-rooted faith in the church, which has a wonderfully tranquilizing influence upon the national character. The ceremonies of worship are conducted under established forms, and there is a general custom with all classes, of participating in them on the regular calendar days. Their churches are often the most beautiful, and at the same time solemn structures that can be imagined ; I know nothing more splendid than the sight of their burnished spires when seen at a distance, in full sunlight, pointing heavenward like threads of light.

The Prince attends church at least once, regularly, every Sunday, unless it rains, and takes an audible part in the service ; his wife and the young ladies usually accompany him. Their pew is the first on the right hand as you go down the middle aisle from the chancel—a plain gold one, with gold-bound books, and a simple cloth-of-gold cushion ; for the

Princess feels herself obliged to set a good example, and therefore discountenances the use of bibles and prayer-books with costly steel clasps, mahogany desks, and all such foolish ostentation. The clergyman who officiates at the Royal Chapel is a most excellent man; he dines with the family every Wednesday. A favorite idea of his is, that preachers should permit their hearers to observe the same rule with respect to sermons which it is a maxim to remember in dining, viz: that they should suffer them to go away with an appetite.

In morals and physics, in the general idea of life, or traditionary opinion as to what course contributes most universally to health, happiness, intellectual vigor and long life, I could not but be convinced that the Aurifodinians are vastly our superiors. In bodily strength and beauty, they are the finest race I have ever seen; their average duration of life is longer than ours, and during the whole of my residence among them I do not remember to have conversed with a single individual who appeared to me deficient in ability. They are temperate, though

by no means abstemious; there is very little disorderly conduct among them—true, a few crackers were let off on the fourteenth of July, (a great day with them,) and I saw also, that day, several individuals in the streets who appeared, as we say, a little “discouraged”—i. e., laboring under the depressing influence of a too liberal indulgence in beverages of an intoxicating character. But in general they are a quiet, orderly people, robust and cheerful, but not given to popular commotions and epidemics.

This may be in a measure owing to their delightful climate, and the nature of the material they are obliged to use for dwellings; the great weight of the gold they handle so much may keep them strong, and its purity may render their houses healthy. But, on the whole, I am disposed to ascribe less effect to these influences than to that of the traditionary lore which they have inherited through successive generations of sages. The maxims of life which are inculcated upon them, even while they lie in their golden cradles, the precepts of their philosophers,

the character and stability of their form of government, all tend directly to preserve them in peace, happiness, and plenty.

As a specimen of their system, I will give a few sentences from the advice of *Komun Z' Ens*, a great philosopher, who flourished 1250 *dono-owlongs* (about 3000 years) ago, to his beloved son, *Yong Fella*; the philosopher's works fill thirty-one volumes, but I remember only a few sentences :—

“KEEP THY BODY UPRIGHT. *For the body is the tabernacle of the soul. Therefore nourish it with wholesome food ; strengthen it by exercise, and protect and beautify it with comfortable and becoming apparel.*”

“KEEP THY MIND INTEGRAL. *For else how canst thou rightly foresee what shall make for or against thy happiness ? And to that end, subdue thy troublesome passions ; deal justly towards men and kindly towards women ; and so live that thy past life shall not reproach thee. Grieve not for what cannot be helped. That only is thine which is around and before thee. Be more careful not to give injuries than to requite them.*

Be as cautious how thou gettest Iron, as thou art to pay it when thou owest it ; misfortune may bring thee to poverty, but it cannot make thee a cheat. Take all things easy ; otherwise thou canst not think, and thinking is the soul's life."

"KEEP THY HEART PURE. *For the happiness of the soul is in the affections which pass out from it. And to that end, study to make others love thee. Remember that he who soweth joy in hearts, reapeth a richer harvest than he who gaineth a hundred weight of Iron."*

I wish I could recal more of these profound sayings, and enter at length into a discussion of the influence which the writings of *Komun Z' Ens* and the philosophers of his school have exerted upon the character of the Aurifodinian people. But as before observed, that must be reserved for another place.

I will now return to my narrative of life in the Palace.

It may be suspected, indeed I will not be so squeamish as to conceal, that the presence of *Mi-deeré* in the library, during those pleasant summer mornings, may have been one reason why my studies made no deeper impression upon my memory. At first she would steal in merely by accident, just to see what I was doing, and stay "only an instant;" then we got reading something, and were obliged to make an appointment to finish it next day—and so our intimacy grew, till we were very soon constant morning companions. Observing this, I took once a pliant hour, and made her ask me to tell the story of my life, of which she had only heard a little here and there in my conversations with her father. When I came to some of my perilous adventures among the Indians, in spite of all she could do, she could not help crying. She declared she never had heard such wonderful stories in her life; and so dreadful too! She could not bear to think of what I had undergone, and almost wished I had not told her; yet she was so fond of romance, she would give anything to be a man, and able to encounter such

dangers and hardships. She thought if I were to go home, and our women were like theirs, I might win, with such narratives, any lady in the land. But then she would add, in her innocent way, those most expressive interjections in her golden tongue, "*dongowaa !*" "*uwongowaa ?*" implying that she did not know what she should do if I were to absent myself from her father's dominions.

How could I keep from loving her ? In truth I did not think of trying what would have proved so vain an experiment. We were not long in understanding each other, and were not ashamed that all the host of dead worthies in that learned hall should witness the exchange of our vows, and the many tokens by which we ratified them.

Meanwhile I had a suspicion that the Prince and his lady could not but be aware of the state of affairs between us, and were not averse to the alliance. We were often rallied about it, even in their very presence, especially by Miss *Prittakritta*, whose charming spirits led her to turn everything to ridicule. But they kept their own counsel so well that

I was not quite sure, and sometimes, when the absurdity of my marrying a princess of the blood royal, of the richest kingdom in the world, would stare me in the face, I was obliged to call up all my resolution to shake off despondence.

At such times I would exert unusual effort to please the Prince, and to impress him with a good opinion of my character and abilities. He was fond of hearing me dilate upon the affairs and customs of my native country, and would listen attentively to my accounts, and comment upon them with singular sagacity.

As we sat over our wine, I once began from the very beginning, and narrated the history of our prosperous and powerful nation. I told him how Columbus discovered America in 1492; then I went minutely into our Colonial history, and showed how our ancestors languished under the oppression of British despotism. At length, I said, after a long and bloody war, the independence of the United States was acknowledged by the mother country. I then gave a full account of our glorious constitution,

and set forth all the important particulars of our democratic republican institutions—institutions to which, I said, we are indebted for an increase of population, and an agricultural and commercial prosperity hitherto without parallel in the history of nations.

The Prince would frequently interrupt me with pertinent queries. For example, he would inquire whether all this growth and prosperity were fairly attributable to the government. “Here,” you say, he would observe, “there is a new and fertile continent placed in communication with one which is old and overstocked. Is it not reasonable to suppose that the immigration must have had much to do in helping to fill it so rapidly? Adults coming hither are as children born at full age; ten men are worth a hundred children, for the children require care, food, and years, and nine-tenths die; immigration forestalls time. It seems to me that with all this, government has had but little to do; that it is owing to natural causes, whose action any government permitting a tolerable security to life and property

would not have disturbed. Governments are often made responsible for prosperity or adversity which they could have done little to hasten or hinder."

I said in defence, that I was little versed in political science, and had given the matter very little thought; but that I merely repeated what the politicians and speech-makers in my country were every day saying to the people. It was there held that the experiment had been fairly tried, and proved successful.

"Nay," said he, "half a century is but a day in the history of nations. Hitherto all things have contributed to your advancement. Wait until the strife of existence becomes crowded and earnest among you, before you consider the question settled. But does not this glorying in your good fortune have a bad influence on the national character?"

"By no means," I replied; "my countrymen are no vain boasters. They are gallant and brave, and ready to die on the battle-field rather than endure the least stain upon the national honor—"

"Indeed!" cried the Prince, interrupting me;

"if that is the feeling, it is fortunate there is a barrier between us that can defy an invading army. With such a spirit constantly at work among you, the faintest spark will kindle a foreign war; the foolishlest pretext excuse conquest or pillage. I am heartily glad you cannot drag your cannon over yonder icy summits."

(When it is remembered that this was uttered before the late war, the Prince must receive some credit for penetration.)

Feeling that I was touching rather delicate ground, I hastened to turn aside, and speak of our increasing products and active commerce. I enlarged, also, upon the general greatness of our country, spreading on every side, and gradually encircling the broad continent. I told the Prince that the universal feeling at home was one of exultation in the progress of the nation. This idea was the daily staple of conversation with all classes. With many it had grown so overwhelming, that they seemed to have almost lost personal identity in the national spirit.

I then gave the Prince a full account of the great modern improvements and inventions in mechanics ; I explained the power of steam, and its application to vessels and railroads, and showed how, by their aid, the obstacles of time and space were almost conquered, the future made present, and the distant near. I depicted our industrious people with these all-powerful engines, toiling and agitating in every quarter, so that there was hardly a nook left that was not filled with din and bustle. In short, I painted our enterprising, restless character in the most lively colors I could command.

When I had done, the Prince inquired what all this wear and tear was for ? What was its object ? “ Surely,” he exclaimed, “ men do not labor for the sake of labor. Why, then, in the midst of a fertile country, should you remain in continual hurry and trouble ?”

“ The United States,” I answered, “ are a free country. Every man there is equal to his neighbor, and wishes to be superior. This is the largest liberty. Would you have men without a motive ?”

“Yes,” he replied, “if the motive were the naked love of *power*. And from all you say, this appears to be with your countrymen the universal ruling passion. Power, among you, is what all men strive after and women admire. Is it not so? Does your nation exhibit any traces of a prevailing love of *beauty*? With simple outward beauty of shape or color, how is it, for example?”

I was obliged to confess that in our buildings, public or private, beauty was less regarded than any other quality, and when it was attempted was not often attained. (The designs for the Washington Monument had not then been exhibited.)

“Have you been very successful in any of the Fine Arts?”

I told him that here his theory would not hold, for that we had produced the greatest sculptors in the world—that the number of paintings (each one of which was what would be called, in their language, a “*shefdoover*,” which means “fine picture”) annually exhibited at our Art Unions, was astonishing; and that we had already given birth

to a national music, unlike any that was ever heard in the world before.

“Now my dear *Quirkustuma*,” said the Prince, “did I not perceive by your smiling that you do not believe what you are saying, you should be fined a bumper for abusing my credulousness. It is natural you should take a pride in your country, but when you consider, I think you must admit that my view is just. You love power, and are willing to spend life in labor to gain it; beauty, and the repose that is necessary to enjoy it, you do not so much mind. Even the highest form of beauty, moral beauty, or beauty of character, is not, I suspect, overmuch estimated with you. When an individual among you has gained power, or wealth, which is a form of it, is it much thought of how he obtained it?”

I could not deny that men often crawled into respectability through the uncleanest channels, and that the foulness which ought to have adhered to them soon slid off and was forgotten.

“Yes, both in politics and business,” added the

Prince. "The appetite for power is so absorbing that it consumes all others, and keeps you in a perpetual fever. You will not preserve yourselves in quietness; your constitution is such that none of you can enjoy inward peace until he is lording it over his neighbor. There is the beautiful world lying around you—the same sun that shines here, you tell me, the same air, trees, flowers—there also is within, the inexhaustible delights that spring from the affectionous, friendship, love, all the sweet charities of life—and in the midst of all this, which with moderate labor you might enjoy, you think only of acquiring new territories and building new cities."

"To me," continued he, "this disposition is as strange as would be the conduct of a hungry man placed in my seat, who should turn away from this capital boiled leg of mutton, yonder goose, gravy, onions, corned beef, cabbage—all these good things, and insist upon eating nothing but this dry crust of bread. I cannot comprehend it. How your countrymen can deprive themselves of all that we esteem desirable in life, and content themselves with say-

ing to one another that ' America is a great country ! ' I cannot conceive. Nor do I understand why a man cannot remain quiet in a comfortable decent station. In fine, when there is in the world so much to be seen, learned and enjoyed, I am unable to find in any sort of ruling idea, a sufficient motive for denying myself the pleasurable part of existence. No ! give me my daily round of labor ; after that, let me sit here with you, my friends, or in my study ; or let us walk together in the park, or up to the cool spring ; or if the weather does not permit, then to look over *Mibuta's* portfolio, or listen to *Mideeré's* lute—these are delights that I can understand."

" But what most surprises me," he continued, " is that your women should so readily acquiesce in, and cherish this love of power in the other sex. Are they so feeble, or so timid, that they dare not trust the strength and affection of men who do not care to conquer other men ? or are they so vain and power-loving themselves, that they keep their affections within the control of their pride, and make

their husbands and lovers the instruments of their aspirations? Do they, like the slave women you have told me of in the Eastern world, consider it honorable to be purchased by rich masters? Perhaps they are not attractive, like our women?"

This I denied at once, and with so much vehemence, that *Mideéré* looked at me anxiously.

"Then it must be they are less confident in the power of affection, less easily impressed by gentle influences, more desirous of surrounding themselves with men's defences than trusting in men's love for them; in short, more mannish. I warrant me, there are among them plenty who are quite ready to relieve men of their duties——"

"Sir," said I, "you are well aware of the profound regard I entertain for your character as a man and a gentleman—but I beg you to consider that I am but human, and nothing in the shape of humanity could sit and hear his own country abused at the rate you have been abusing mine, without—'getting rily'"——said I, at a loss for a word; for just at that instant *Mideéré* pressed my right hand under the

table-cloth. "No, sir! the American women are as lovely as any of their sex on this terraqueous ball ; and I wish"—another pressure—"I wish your Majesty a—a—ugh!" I feared my impetuosity had very nigh offended the Prince, if not another person. So I had no resource but to choke myself with my wine, a trick which from long practice I can do quite naturally, and find it a capital *dernier resort* on delicate occasions.

But there was no occasion for alarm, for the Prince only smiled, and as it was now nearly dark, the Princess and her ladies took the opportunity of the interruption to retire from the table, and thus the conversation ended.

That same evening I was not a little surprised to receive an invitation from the Prince to attend him in his study. This was a small apartment above the library, and communicating with it by a special staircase. It was looked upon as the Prince's private retiring room, into which no one but his wife would think of venturing without his particular request. Why should he wish to see me there now? As

I threaded the corridor and passages leading to that part of the palace, I could not help suspecting it must be for some purpose connected with myself and *Mideéré*—either to sanction our attachment, or give me warning to let it proceed no further—and it was with a beating heart that I tapped at his door and turned the latch.

He was in his dressing gown, a rather rich one for the country, being made of beautiful blue cotton calico, like one I now possess myself; as I entered he rose from his sofa, where it was evident he had been enjoying a *siesta* since dinner. Without the least embarrassment of manner, he bade me take a chair, and began remarking in an easy tone, that he had a few words to say to me, and his time was so much occupied by business he could find no better opportunity than the present, if it was convenient to me. I answered that it was. He then went into a general discussion of the duties of parents, touched upon filial and other kinds of affection—love of country, for example, which he was glad to see that I possessed in an eminent degree.

There was, he thought, scarcely any trait of character more pleasing.

Upon this I began to take heart, and enlarged upon the love which ought to subsist between man and woman. The highest happiness in this life I considered must be found in this attachment.

Thus we went on, the Prince more and more familiar, and I more and more confident, until at length I found courage to ask him for his daughter. He then frankly confessed that he had expected I would do so, and had sent for me and smoothed the way, in order that he might spare both me and *Mideéré* the pain of suspense. The affection he had seen growing up between us had given him sincere joy, and, said he, "I am not one of those fathers who take advantage of their position to gratify their love of authority, under the name of prudence, and who wear out the souls of the young through their inability to discern sincerity and constancy, until they have put the hearts that possess them on the rack. I see her mother in *Mideéré* ; yourself I do not know so well, but your position here has given me good

opportunities to study you, and I am glad my daughter has fixed her heart on one so worthy."

"The confidence of such a Prince," I answered, "and the love of such a lady, are the strongest incentives to render one desirous of keeping the esteem of good men that I can conceive."

"I know you think so," said the Prince, "and I believe you are honest and frank, and can appreciate those qualities in others. I give you my daughter without affected reluctance; she is yours; you are both my children; I love you both."

I could only grasp his hand with both mine, and promise that I would never prove undeserving of his noble trust or *Mideeré's* love.

Ever since, as often as I remember that interview, I cannot help thinking how much more far-sighted, if you will have it so, though I know it proceeded from his genuine loftiness of character, was this putting me upon my honor, than if he had treated me with jealous watchfulness and obliged me to play the hypocrite.

At the end of our long conversation, he asked me

to take a glass of wine with him, and remarked that it was possible I might find some one of the family in the library. I understood the hint, and descended the private staircase. There was no light in the library, but the full moonbeams blazed on the golden floor, and a figure seated on the gold-cushioned seat was leaning out of the window. I called a certain dear name as I ran across the hall, when the figure quickly rose and came towards me. * * * * *

In a few moments the Prince followed me down the staircase, leading the Princess, whose dressing-room adjoined the study ; *Mideéré* and I met them in the middle of the hall, and received their blessing. The evening being then well advanced, we bade each other good night—two of us, at least, with hearts too full for sleep.

On the following morning I soon perceived, as I entered the audience chamber, that the Prince had caused my relation to his family to be at once made known, and I began to feel what it was to be engaged to a lady of royal birth. *Guttichinks*, usually

rather taciturn, was now particularly affable, and congratulated me on my looking so well; in truth I was looking at this time in the prime of health, having recovered from the hardships of the wilderness, and being naturally of a good face and figure. *Kashkash*, master of the mint, who had once declined loaning me a small sum of iron, except upon the security of my rifle, an old friend I was not disposed to part with, now took opportunity to mention casually that funds were much easier, and that if I wished, he could accommodate me with twenty weight, if I wished so much, on my saying the word. One old Lord *Pompandl*, who had been, when I was first about the Court, very patronizing, was now oppressively obsequious.

As soon as the audience was over I hastened to the library, where I found *Mideeré* waiting for me; we had not sat long before in came the Prince and Princess, and after the usual morning greetings began to rally us, asking gaily when we expected to be married, as they presumed there would be no peace in the palace till then. I replied in the same

vein, that the palace would probably continue peaceful enough unless difficulty should arise between our worthy seniors, and that *Mideeré* could tell them better about the other matter than I. "Nay," said *Mideeré*, "I will be a pattern of duty and refer you to my mother."

Then the Prince and Princess told us that as it would be necessary for the ceremony to be performed in state, the best time would be the Fourteenth of July, the great annual day when they were obliged to leave the Summer Palace and go up to the capital city, which is in the centre of the kingdom, and is called "AURUM." It was the last week in June, so that we could not complain of the delay, especially as it would be necessary to make some state visits on the occasion of our engagement, the publication of which would immediately cause public festivities throughout the kingdom. They said we need put ourselves to no trouble, however, as the whole provision and management of the affair would be left entirely to the Comptroller of the Kitchen and the Lord Chamberlain, who was no less

a personage than *Bulyun Ingut*. (I had never yet seen him, as he resided in the Imperial City, and only came out to the Summer Palace on rare occasions.)

The Prince told me my marriage would make me at once a citizen, and heir presumptive to the throne. He desired me to consider that I was entering on a new class of duties, and to conduct myself with reference to the welfare of the state and the stability of its form of government. "For the present," said he, smiling, "I suppose I must not persuade you from your morning studies with this interesting young lady; but when we have returned from the great festival, I shall expect you to assist me in labors less attractive."

Thus were arranged all the particulars of our marriage, with a truly royal facility. We walked up to the spring that afternoon—*Mideéré* and I—and when we came back, at sunset, we heard the bells ringing in the village below; and soon after rockets were let off from the palace roof, which were answered by similar signals as far as we could see. As we

walked upon the portico, the domestics, and a large number of the villagers, assembled in front of the palace, and gave nine cheers, waving their golden caps, under the glare of the rockets, with great enthusiasm. I was quite elated ; but *Mideeré*, who remembered a wedding in the royal family, which took place when she was a child, said it was nothing in comparison with what we should have to go through at the city.

Time now passed very rapidly. We dined *en famille*, as before ; but our days were so much occupied that we had few opportunities for our delightful morning *tête-à-têtes*. *Mideeré* was busied with dress-makers, who were exerting all their skill in adorning her beautiful form with robes of the costliest cotton ; while I was obliged to hold hourly consultations with the court tailors, preparatory to changing my ordinary cloth-of-gold clothes for garments more becoming royalty.

Sometimes the royal coach was harnessed up to six beautiful buffaloes, and we drove around, attended by the ladies *Mibuta*, *Prittakritta*, or *Kissa-*

me, among the neighboring gentry, whose rank entitled them to the honor of a royal visit, customary on such occasions. We visited *Wonotha Bigbugs*, a pompous old nobleman, whose lady, *Madam Tallanbona*, impressed me as a person of great dignity. Here we were served with cake and wine from pewter plate of inestimable value. The appearance of the *Bigbug* mansion, an antique dwelling of solid rough gold, was to me very grand.

Leaving thence, by a road which wound, for two or three miles, under a gold ledge, that almost blinded us, and made the air intolerably hot, we came to the palace of General *Bigphelin Fella*, who is very much respected in the army ; but who, from what I saw of his despatches and manners, I could help not fancying a little inclined to be pompous. Several iron swords were hanging in his parlor, which had been presented to him on different occasions, for his gallant conduct. He dresses in plain cloth-of-gold undress, like a common citizen.

Another day we called on the noble Councillor *Rollinggold*, who is esteemed the first financier in the

kingdom ; I remembered his daughters *Marygold*, *Auburnare*, *Blooiziz*, and *Rosachika*, when we afterwards met them at the grand festival. The Baron *Rechasa Ju*, and his daughters, *Roubalip* and *Briteiziz*, we also called upon ; the Baron had been a merchant who dealt largely in Iron, and thus acquired immense possessions. In fine, we spent several days in these calls of ceremony upon the neighboring aristocracy, of whom very many choose to reside in a vicinity where the Prince usually spends the greater part of the year.

But it was now the first of July, and as we must be in the city at least a week before the fourteenth, immediate preparations were made for departure ; about noon on the fourth we set out. The royal procession consisted of twenty gold coaches, each drawn by six magnificent buffaloes, having their golden horns ornamented, while on the march, with green cotton sheaths.

I must say, I think a gold road the pleasantest for travelling in the world ; the metal soon wears very smooth ; and the carriage-way becomes as if macadamized, only the material being soft and heavy it is less dusty.

As we advanced on our journey we passed many beautiful villages, at the entrances to which were always triumphal arches, with wreaths of evergreen encircling the letters "Q." and "M." Here the citizens would be assembled to welcome us ; often with choirs of young maidens clad in white and gold, and garlanded with roses ; bands of music, with golden horns and trumpets, would precede us through the streets, and cavalcades of the military would escort us for a long distance on our way. I observed also, as we neared the great city, that large numbers of the population seemed flocking thither ; flags of all colors were flying from house-tops and from the blazing domes of public edifices. We looked over green meadows and fields, and saw the farmers lean on their yellow scythes and ploughs, and gaze wistfully at the thronged high-

way ; many country people, of the poorer sort, had gold carts drawn by single buffaloes, in which they would be crowded of all sizes ; their clean gilt clothing set off to the best advantage, with leafy wreaths and flowers ; singing and shouting as they jounced along in their springless vehicles, as though their hearts were bursting for joy.

I could not but feel the influence of all around me more sensibly than did *Mideeré*, to whom such scenes were not novel ; but she was so glad to see how happy I was, that there were no bounds to her joy ; Miss *Prittakritta* kept us in perpetual mirth by surprising me into odd expressions about everything I saw, while *Mibuta's* merriment was of that contagious character we could not have resisted had we wished. What amused me not a little, we peeped over into the coach before us and saw the Prince and his consort, wearied with the length of the journey, fast asleep, and their heads bobbing ; in the coach behind, the venerable *Raforzak* and *Pok-itphul* appeared to be gravely discussing some point of state policy ; so little did they mind the golden

towns, villages, and seats that filled the thickly populated country through which we were passing, or the great aurifactories that now and then showed their tall chimnies over intervening farms and groves.

At length, about an hour before sunset on the afternoon of the sixth of July, we caught a glimpse of a golden spire, that appeared in the distance like an immense fiery meteor. *Mideeré* told me this was the great church, which stood in a remote part of the city. I was now all expectation; but the rest were dreading the delay of the reception, and wishing they might get early to bed. As the sun went down, and we met mowers plodding homeward, and milkmen, with yellow pails, driving buffaloes, all but me began to feel the effect of weariness. *Mideeré*, quite worn out with our long journey, laid her head upon my shoulder and slept—a manner of repose which any one who has observed the beautiful sleeping groups among emigrant deck passengers on our steamboats, must agree with me in thinking one of the most graceful and confiding a

young woman can place herself in. I could not have slept for very love of her, even had I been so inclined.

It was long after dark when we came upon the long converging lines of gas lights which border the great avenues leading to the city ; and some time after that, before our coach-wheels began to rumble over the golden pavement. As we came gradually into the close-built streets, I perceived that the fronts of the houses were illuminated, and the way kept open for our passage by the police, with gold stars ; crowds were hurrying along the sidewalks, bearing torches ; which, with the blazing windows and the shining dresses of the rabble, made the street as light as day.

And now the great bells began to ring, and rockets which we could not see were hissing overhead. *Mideeré* was awakened by the tumult, while *Mibuta* and *Prittakritta* grew quite animated as we passed some well-known shops. “ See,” cried the former, “ there’s *Bez* !” Soon after the other exclaimed, “ here’s *Stoortz*, where my plaid shawl

came from!" And then they both looked over the way and saw *Typhani's*, where they purchased their steel bracelets and slate cameos.

We had now reached an open square surrounded by a heavy gold railing, and containing many ornamental trees. It was thronged with people. Towards the farther extremity of it was a great golden fountain. In the middle stood the royal palace, all one blaze of light and gold. *Mideéré* pointed out various buildings, and told me their names; the palace is called "*Sitioll*;" on the east of the square is another great palace called "*Tamanioll*;" this is the great national school of oratory and manners. On the west is the "*Hastarowse*," a princely structure, occupied by *Ztetz*, First Lord of the Commissariat Department, and Curator of Delegates from the various provinces. All these buildings were now brilliantly illuminated, and the whole square was one blaze of splendor, almost too dazzling to be looked upon without pain.

It seemed as if half the population of *AURUM* were here assembled; and when the line of our coaches

entered the golden gate, and drew up before the great entrance of the *Sitioll*, we were almost deafened with cheers. But when the Prince and Princess, with *Mibuta*, stood uncovered on the broad yellow staircase, and bowed to the multitude, while I and *Mideéré* did the same a little below him, the shouting was absolutely terrific, striking on my poor ears like solid blows. I was heartily glad for her sake, as well as my own, when this part of the ceremony was over.

It had been intended to have a banquet prepared for our reception, but the Prince, foreseeing that we should arrive in the evening, when we should all be fatigued, sent word to the Lord Chamberlain by an avant-courier to have this postponed; also the ceremony of presenting me to the people, he had upon reflection concluded to defer till the celebration of the marriage. Accordingly, when we entered the palace, we were shown at once by some lords and ladies in waiting, to a private apartment, where, by the Prince's direction, we took off our things and attacked a nice hot supper, long before

he had finished shaking hands with the noblemen and grandees who had come up to the festival from various parts of the kingdom. *Mideeré*, much refreshed by her sleep and the hot supper, would have sat and chatted till midnight, but I was beginning to be very drowsy myself, and what with the din and glare felt quite stupid ; so telling her this, and kissing her forehead, I bade her good night and had the domestics attend me to my apartments, which were on the eastern side of the palace.

There I hurried into bed as soon as possible ; but I could not sleep, and for a long while did not divine the reason. At last it came to me—they had put me into a feather bed ! I got up and tore it off in a rage, and vowed to send for *Tiklipz*, who had been my valet at the Summer Palace, the first thing next day. Then I lay down and slept very comfortably till morning.

When I woke I opened the casement and looked out of the window. The sun was just rising above the dark line of the distant eastern hills. The air was beautifully clear, and my point of view overlook-

ed the mirror-like roofs of half the city. Presently the sun crept up and threw a clear beam over all. The effect was wonderfully sublime. Instantly, as if by the express command of Him who said "let there be light; and there was light," the prospect glowed with an inconceivable brilliance. Yet it was not a dry, fiery light, that seared the eyeballs to look upon, but a pure, life-imparting lustre, that seemed shed from over the crystal battlements of heaven. It brought with it old memories of youth, visions of May mornings in dewy meadows, and that sense of the freshness of Nature which revisits us only at rare times after the days of childhood. What brightness, what inexpressible glory exhaled, as it were, from the scene, and passed into my heart! All memories of care, all bitterness of grief, all unquietness of wrongs endured and hopes blighted, rolled away as I gazed from over my soul, and left me in the old rapture, when

"The earth and every common sight,

To me did seem

Appareled in celestial light!"

My whole being was moved, and I could not refrain from dropping on my knees and thanking Heaven, as I might and ought to have done, had it been but a vision of my fancy, for this foretaste of that city whose streets are of pure gold, and where there is no more sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain !

Just then all the bells of the city rang out all together in crashing, joyous peals, that woke every inhabitant at once to the life of day. Recalled by them to the immediate business of the hour, I made haste, and soon descended to the great parlor, where *Mideeré* already awaited me. She never seemed so beautiful before ; I could not help fancying I saw a faint glory round her head, such as is painted round the head of the Madonna. She too had been inspired by the morning, and she now took me to a lofty verandah on the eastern front, above my chamber, where we might promenade and enjoy the glorious golden light until breakfast. Here we walked and talked, with hearts full of love, and joy, and peace. Alas ! why am I here to tell it ?

At length, at the sound of a golden gong, we descended to the breakfast parlor. About eleven o'clock, breakfast being over, we had the coach brought round, and *Mideeré*, *Mibuta*, *Prittakritta*, and I, drove about town to see the lions. We attended morning service at one of the principal churches. It was built of gold, but there was a great deal of showy mahogany on the pulpit, and the light through the windows I thought rather gaudy for a religious house. However, the people of AURUM are accustomed to high colors ; I saw a man here who had painted his face bright red, at a very great expense. I was amused to see the golden diapasons of the organ in this church, colored to resemble rusty iron.

But the most splendid sight of all was in the outskirts of the city, where vast numbers who had come up to attend the great national holidays, were encamped in villages of golden tents, which were spread on the green fields. Here were all sorts of sports for the poorer sort, pantomimes, rope-dancing, quoit-throwing, bowling (with hollow golden balls),

and other athletic games, fandangos, flying buffaloes, and all sorts of amusements that can be conceived—among others one or two almost peculiar to this people, viz: that of flying kites and balloons. Kite-flying is practiced as a game only here and in China. In London they have generally a single balloon, like the hundreds here; but the cheapness of *gas*, which issues plentifully from the earth in Aurifodina as well as California, renders ballooning a favorite amusement.

Nothing can be more singular than the appearance of these great golden balls, more than one can readily count, hanging in the air; they are held by cords, but in still days, the air is so calm above this delightful country, that they let them go up a thousand feet or more. Generally they are made to carry up only a single person; the very large ones being found inconvenient. We saw more than a hundred of these from different places around the city, some of them swinging with their little gilt baskets at a height which dwindled them to mere bright specks. The price of a ride in them is only

about three shillings an hour ; whenever the aeronaut wishes to come down, he shows a flag, and the man at the foot winds him down with a great wheel very quickly.

We rode around the city, gratifying our eyes with all these wonders and shows, till near dinner time, when we returned and dined privately, as we had been accustomed to do in the country. The postponement of my introduction to the public till the day of the wedding was very gratifying to me, by giving me an opportunity of making myself a little familiar with their manners and customs, unobserved of others.

In the evening we went to the theatre ; I remarked that in the banquet scene in a play where a noble murders a king, the supper was played with real gold goblets ; and at the conclusion of the piece, the principal actor, notwithstanding he was a very clever one, was not called before the curtain. After the play we had something hot in one of the basements, and retired to rest, satisfied with ourselves and all the world.

All the days in the week that intervened before the Fourteenth were spent much in the same agreeable manner. Except my natural impatience for the wedding, I was perfectly happy, or so near to it that it is with difficulty I can descend to particulars, in speaking of a time which was to me one flood of blissful emotion.

I remember that one day we visited a large printing establishment, where I saw compositors busily setting gold type, while the foreman was imposing a gold form on a gold stone. Miss *Prittakritta*, who had never seen a printing-office before, must needs touch some nonpareil matter that stood on, a gold galley, and the consequence was, of course, a small gold pie.

We went to a piano-maker's, (for *Mideeré* must have an instrument, if but for the fashion's sake;) there I examined the structure of several, each one of which was pronounced by a distinguished professor, the best in its way that was ever heard—some for tone, others for touch, and so on. But I could perceive little difference except in the prices, which

appeared to depend principally on the comparative size and carving of the gold cases.

At a jeweller's, one morning, I was extravagant enough to supply myself with a steel card-case, and made *Mideeré* a present of a thimble, also of pure steel, very fine.

Perhaps with an effort, I could recall many more incidents of that week, but from what I have given, the reader can imagine them. I hasten at once, therefore, to the wedding ceremony, some of the scenes of which I shall never forget, though I was not in a position where, even had I been a spectator, I could have observed the whole of them.

I remember the happy hour when we stood before the altar of the great church, and I placed upon *Mideeré's* finger the bright steel ring that made her mine. There were the archbishops in their white robes, the Prince and Princess, the chief noblemen and ladies, all the high dignities of the kingdom ; the vast body of the church was crowded with the wealth and beauty of the capital, while the spacious galleries were filled with an im-

mense concourse of all classes from the provinces. It was high noon, and the sun poured his rays through the stained glass windows, and lighted up the scene with a splendor to which there was nothing ever seen in this part of the world that I can liken it. For the whole interior of the church is lined with gold of the finest quality found in the kingdom—that being considered the most proper material for halls which are designed to impress the mind with a sense of simple grandeur. And this gold is kept burnished, like the speculum of a telescope, so that wherever the sunlight strikes, there is one continuous blaze of living fire.

Even engaged as I was, in the most sacred and solemn rite known among mankind, I could not forbear stealing now and then a glance at the lofty ceiling, whose arched beams and pendules were wrought in all manner of rich chasing, vines inter-twisting, clusters, fantastic heads, and cherubs touching their golden wings. The storied walls, also, where hung many a memorial of past ages, and where the records of heroic and venerable men were carved

in letters of light, on a substance more imperishable as well as infinitely more beautiful than brass or marble, frequently excited my attention.

The wonderful purity, as well as the exquisite brightness of the gold, gave the whole interior a ruddy glow, as different as possible from the brassy lustre of common gilt. It was as if there floated in the air an ethereal vermeil tincture, like that which radiated from the cheek of her whom I had come there to pledge myself unto till death should us part; and like that, it inspired my heart with sacred rapture. It explained to me the force of the epithet "red gold," which I had seen in the writings of the Father of Aurifodinian poetry, and gave me such a sense of exalted life, that I could not but fancy so much of it thus employed, had, in some occult manner, the power to impart its own purity and immortality.

When the ceremony was concluded, a great choir of young men and maidens, accompanied by the full organ, and an orchestra with golden instruments, pealed forth a Hallelujah Chorus, such as that only

one in the world worthy to be heard in such a place. The princely assemblage rose and let their hearts echo the inspiration of the mighty musician. I confess myself at that moment so overborne with ecstasy, that I should not have wondered to have seen angels descending the vaulted arches, and bringing a visual assurance that our praises were acceptable to the majesty of Heaven.

But now the solemn rite is ended, and we have left the church and return in grand procession to the Palace. The broad street is fluttering with innumerable banners, and shaded with triumphal arches. From every door, window, shining balustrade and gilded roof, there are kerchiefs waving, and "God save the Prince!" resounds from ten thousand thousand voices. The bells are all ringing; as we reach the great square, the golden fountain is playing; the concourse is so dense the police with difficulty keep the way clear to the Palace.

Here the King and Queen, (for such they were now, the custom being for the Prince to hold his

original title till there is some one to take it, lest it become extinct,) followed by myself and *Mideeré*, now Prince and Princess, advanced into the great Banqueting Hall, where, with the chief nobles and ladies of the realm, we sat down to a repast befitting the magnificence of the occasion. After the removal of the cloth, His Majesty rose and proposed for the first regular toast,

“THE DAY WE CELEBRATE!”

When this was drunk with the usual honors, *Raforzak*, the Premier, after a brief speech gave

“THE HEALTH OF THEIR MAJESTIES!”

This called out the King, who rose and after suitable thanks said in substance, “that he was about to introduce to his loyal subjects, one in whom he had all a father’s confidence, and whom he hoped would receive the homage of his people. He need not mention the name of the individual alluded to, it being already known to all present. He presumed he had extended his remarks to a sufficient length, and would end by proposing :—

“THE HEALTH OF THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS!”

This was received with such vociferous cheering it was a long while before I could make myself heard. When I succeeded, I replied in an appropriate speech, designed for popular effect, professing my high estimation of my father-in-law, and avowing my intention to give my best energies to the carrying out of the present system of policy. I said I could not better conclude than by proposing—

“THE FAIR SEX!”

“O woman!——

When pain and anguish wring the brow,

A ministering angel thou!”

This was received with nine times nine. Other toasts then succeeded. His Majesty then rose and appointing the Grand Duke *Zktschwiski* chairman in stead, took the hand of the Queen and led her from the table; I, with *Mideéré*, her sister, and the other ladies and gents of the household, following him, according to the Court etiquette. When we reached the parlor, the whole family in succession saluted the

bride—I alone reserving the compliment for a more convenient season. Tea was then handed round, and we talked of the incidents of the day, until nine o'clock, when word was brought that the nobles and gentry were assembling in the Royal Ball-room, which is but a short distance from the Palace, in the great building called the School of Manners, or “*Tamanioll*.”

Here it was necessary to show ourselves, and we accordingly went. But *Mideeré* retired very soon, quite fatigued with so much noise and excitement. I remained for a while, undergoing the tedious infliction of having noblemen and ladies presented to me, until, growing exceedingly anxious about my wife's health, I pleaded illness with the King, and hastened to join her in the suite of rich golden apartments appropriated thenceforth to our use.

Thus ended the happiest days of my life. “Happiest,” do I say? I should rather write, “Thus began the happiest days of my life.” For now I lived indeed a life of gold. Prince of a powerful kingdom, the friend of wise men, happy in

my love beyond all example in history, it was a wonder, and I look back upon it with a feeling of pride, that my head was not turned by such extraordinary good fortune—that I did not go mad for joy. Imagine then, the bitterness of my regret when I reflect that it is now all past!

The whole of the week following was one continued scene of joyful festivity. Ball followed ball, visit visit, and party party, till it seemed they intended we should exhaust the Red Book of the kingdom. I left the arrangement of these things to *Mideéré*, placing myself, with the exception of a few hours each morning, entirely at her disposal. She advised with her mother, and consulted with *Mibuta* and the others of the young ladies, and so settled all particulars relating to our social connexion on the best and surest foundation.

Whatever family we elected to visit, was thenceforth in “good society;” those whom she decided to omit were ever after, “not in our circle of friends,” though they might be “respectable people.” I must do *Mideéré* the justice to say that she

performed her task on this occasion with no less discrimination than she had shown in loving me ; she paid little regard to iron, but endeavored to form her aristocracy on the basis of good character, intelligence, and refinement. In this, however, she but acted upon the great maxims ever inculcated upon the Aurifodinian princesses and ladies of high rank. To them and the poets, in that kingdom, belongs the duty of assigning to each person of note, his or her social position, the clergymen being wholly devoted to their duties as guardians and teachers of the faith.

Meanwhile, in the midst of this bustle of gaiety, I did not neglect my duty to my noble father-in-law and friend, his Majesty the King. Each morning we accustomed ourselves to drive together about the city and vicinity, observing and conversing upon what we saw, in the same familiar manner we had been in the habit of using towards each other while at the Summer Palace.

The crowds who had assembled from all quarters to celebrate the holidays, had not diminished since

the day of the wedding. The streets were still thronged; and each day brought its particular series of shows and parades, like our Anniversary week in May. Sometimes the King and I habited ourselves in plain cloth-of-gold clothes, such as are worn by the lower orders, and spent three or four hours of the morning walking here and there among the people, and mingling in their diversions. This was at my suggestion; for I had ever cherished the idea that should fortune thrust greatness upon me, I would imitate the example of that wise and beneficent monarch, the Caliph Haroun Alraschid, whose habits in this respect have long been the world's admiration.

One morning, while we were thus wandering in that part of the suburbs I had visited with *Mideeré*, where were the encampments of golden tents, and all sorts of sports and games, we happened to pass near one of the balloons just as it was drawn down. I naturally enough, suddenly conceived the notion of ascending. The King smiled; he had exhausted the amusement in his boyhood, and looked upon it

as childish. However, he promised to wait for me hard by, while I gratified my curiosity with a prospect of the city and country from a bird's-eye point of view. Accordingly I took my seat in the basket, and gaily pledging myself to the King to "remember him to the Man in the Moon," the operator unwound his wheel and I rapidly ascended.

The air was perfectly still, and the day as clear as clear could be. As I rose, the earth seemed to spread out beneath me. The city soon lay like a beautiful map, and all around were hundreds of golden villages and residences of noblemen and wealthy citizens. Those who have seen the valley of the Hudson, from Pine Orchard, may dimly conceive somewhat of the splendor of the view ; but when it is recollected that here the roofs of the houses were of shining gold, and even the very fences and roads bright with yellow lustre, I may readily be excused for asserting that there is not in all the world a prospect of such magnificence.

I was not so high but that I could distinguish persons in the city, like minute dots, and could even

hear the music that came from a band which was leading some grand procession. Looking down in a slanting direction, I commanded the south front of the Great Palace; and there in the veranda, where *Mideeré* and I had walked together, I saw a white speck which I knew must be her, since the veranda now belonged exclusively to our apartments, with which it was connected. I leaned over, with my chin on the edge of the basket, and abandoned myself to the revery the scene inspired.

I had lain thus, perhaps a quarter of an hour, when I began to perceive that I saw things less distinctly, and while wondering at this, I became aware that the air, which had been perfectly motionless, was now apparently *blowing downward*, in a strong current. What was my horror, on examining the cord which held me to the earth, to find that there was no longer any strain upon it—that it had either given way or become unfastened, and that I was evidently fast rising into the air!

Conceive the agony with which I strained my

gaze upon the white speck in the veranda, till it, and finally the whole city, and all below, faded into indistinctness ! What would become of me, I knew not ; I might float among the clouds till I starved, or my frail bubble might break and let me drop—I had no valve to pull, no communication with the huge cold globe above me. *Mideeré ! O Mideeré !* At that hour I would have given all the gold in the universe, yea, all the iron, to have been once more beside thee !

But cruel destiny did not so ordain. For when I had attained such an immense elevation that all below was only as I had seen it from the Sierra, a vast green ocean, I found that a strong west wind was bearing me rapidly to the eastward. The snowy line of the mountains rose before me ; chilled half to death, and almost maddened with grief, I saw their inaccessible summits pass beneath me and my beautiful kingdom. Still I kept on, and with such speed, that before nightfall their white line sank below the western horizon. At length it grew

dark, and the green sea disappeared. Insensibility came to relieve my despair ; I must have swooned—then slept.

When I woke it was day ; I was on the firm earth, and there were several people standing by. My balloon lay near in a collapsed condition ; entangled in it was a noble bald eagle, who, it was evident, had inconsiderately rushed against it in the night, making a large rent, which had permitted the gas to escape gradually, and thus caused a safe descent. I was now, I soon learned, near the Big Licks of Kentucky—so swift had been the current which bore me eastward. Gathering up my balloon, and exchanging my dress at the house of the gentleman on whose plantation I had landed—a most hospitable man, by the way, whom I was almost ashamed of deceiving with a story about my being Clayton, the famous aeronaut, (an old acquaintance of mine,) and having ascended in this gala dress the day before from Louisville—I took the nearest route to the rivers, and thence, *via* Cincinnati and Pittsburg, to

New York. I had gold enough when I arrived at the first-mentioned city, about my old clothes and my balloon, to pay the expenses of my journey, and several hundred dollars besides.

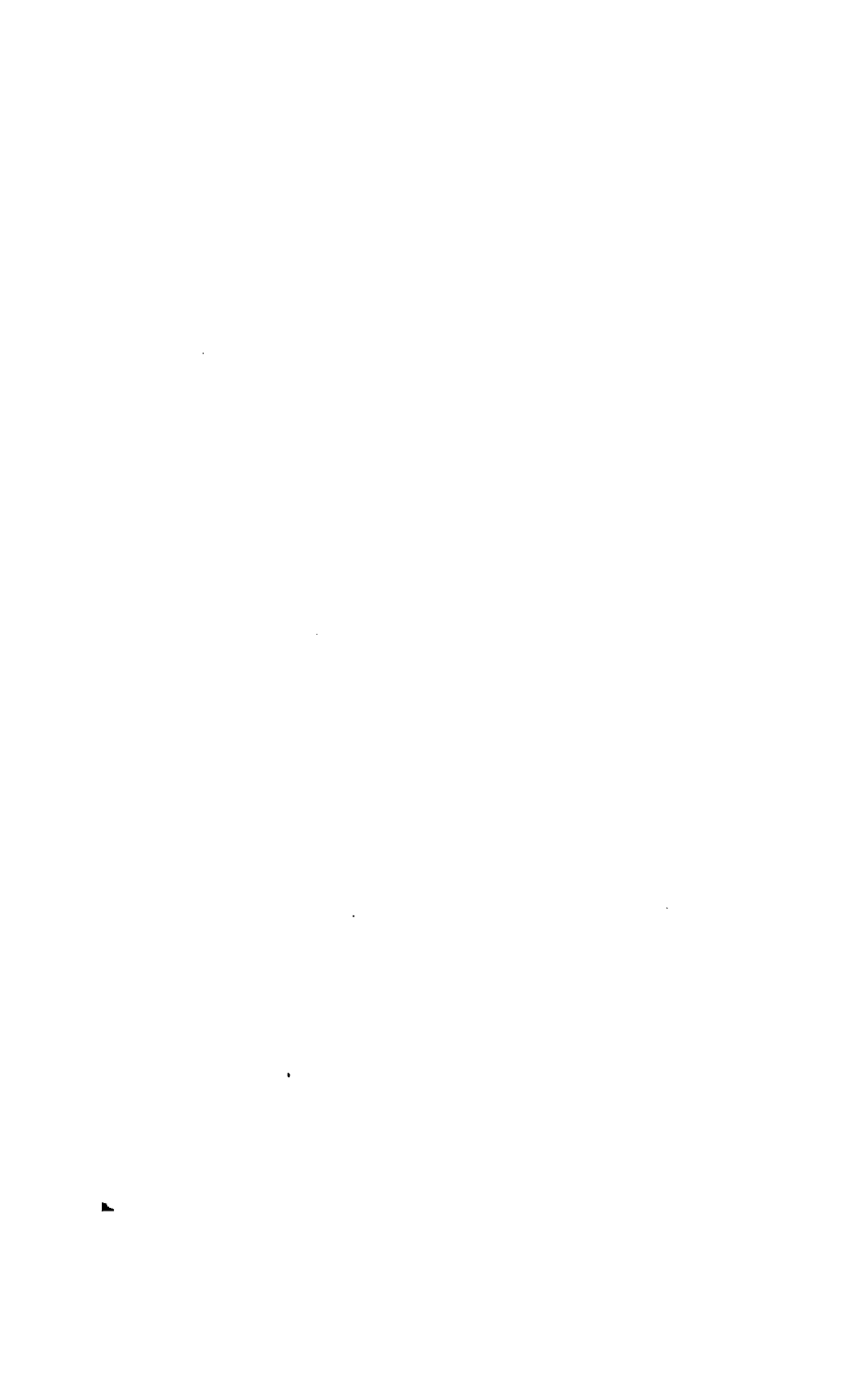
If there were any practicable mode by which I could rejoin my wife and my kingdom, it may be supposed I should not long remain here ; but I dread the idea of attempting the journey. Even should I escape the Snakes and Crows, I doubt if my constitution would stand another passage of the Sierra ; while from all the reports it is likely my country will soon be well known to our public. I despair therefore of ever seeing *Mideeré* again, or ever again beholding my royal father-in-law.

But though my body is thus exiled, my spirit still makes pilgrimages to that happy region. The form of *Mideeré* often comes before my mind's eye ; I often, in my intercourse with men, think whether one course or another would be preferred by my noble father ; and the maxims of *Komun Z'Ens*, and other great philosophers, often aid me by their wisdom.

I particularly study to follow that great fundamental rule of those golden sages, which teaches the propriety of pleasing one's self, by pleasing others ; if this narrative of mine, therefore, shall have the effect of amusing my readers, it will be a great consolation to me in all my losses and afflictions.

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